

Memorandum: BC Comp Plan Sustainability Components

The Broome County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2013. Broome County recognizes that sustainability principles are an integral part of the planning process to ensure the implementation of a vision that outlines resilient, prosperous and healthy communities in consideration of changing conditions and circumstances. We must meet our short-term needs with consideration of what our community will be faced with into the future. Therefore, sustainability elements are integrated throughout the body of the plan. The overall vision itself calls out several the sustainability principles as follows (Page 272):

The Vision: Our residents make Broome County an inviting place to live, work and play. Our students and young professionals are fully engaged in the community. We take pride in our safe, vibrant, attractive urban and village centers and the scenic beauty that surrounds our rural towns and villages. Because we proactively invested in our legacy sites, new ventures now flourish on former brownfields. Our healthy communities are sustained because municipalities have made a commitment to high standards in community services and building design and renovation.

Broome County communities remain strong and resilient in the wake of natural disasters and other challenges through our capacity for cooperation and by incorporating sound planning in all facets of public decision making.

With our partners in education, Broome County invests in our workforce, entrepreneurship, and innovation to continue our legacy as a leader in high technology development. As the birthplace of IBM and the simulation industry, we know the importance of fostering diverse, newly emerging industries such as renewable and clean energy, green technology, and advanced healthcare.

The vision and other components of the plan were developed in light of public input. The planning process included soliciting input via a steering committee with local officials, county departments, and local organizations, a number of stakeholder meetings, public meetings, and a public survey. A summary of these public outreach efforts can be found on *Page i* of the plan and a summary of survey results can be found in the Appendix on *Page 308*.

The plan specifically integrates sustainability elements as follows:

Support alternative modes of transportation (including strategies for bicycles, pedestrians, public transit, and electric vehicles)

The Comprehensive Plan includes several actions that intend to support and enhance alternative modes of transportation. The County plays an active role in implementing components of the Two Rivers Greenway, our local multi-use trail network, accessible for bike and pedestrian use. Broome County Transit regularly assesses the services provided and there is a focus on ensuring that these services meet the needs of jobseekers/workforce, the aging community, and students. Transportation networks are a critical component of any comprehensive planning process, and therefore enhancing alternative transportation is a common theme throughout multiple components of the vision established in the Plan. Specific actions related to this sustainability element are as follows.

Page 283 - Action Table: Vision Item 1: Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play

- Promote elder-friendly suburbs through universal design, zoning for accessory dwelling units, walkable communities, enhance rural transit.

Page 285 - Action Table: Engaging our Students and Young Professionals

- Enhance opportunities for alternative transportation.

Page 286 - Action Table – Vision Item 3: Taking Pride in our Urban and Village Centers

- Support and submit grant applications for streetscape, bike and pedestrian amenities, housing development, commercial investment, façade improvements in our rural villages and urban centers.

Page 290 – Vision Item 6: Making a Commitment to High Standards in Services

- Investigate ways to improve public transportation to accommodate the aging in place population and assist job seekers in finding employment.

Page 291 – Vision Item 7: Making a Commitment to High Standards in Building Design and Renovation

- Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy at the County level
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle amenities into land use design review (239) comments
Improve the County Highway Work Permit process to consider stormwater management, Complete Streets, and other design standards.

Promote smart growth principles in land-use policies

The major smart growth principles that Broome County has focused on in the comprehensive plan include fostering livable communities, promoting downtown development and infill development (brownfields), and enhancing quality of life (Note that other principles include enhancing alternative transportation and fostering a range of housing options, but these are covered under other sustainability elements in this list). As a community that has experienced an economic downturn and is currently undergoing a resurgence, Broome County has recognized that it is important to ensure that we are utilizing the existing infrastructure, including abandoned industrial sites, downtown neighborhoods and business districts, existing water and sewer infrastructure, and other utilities. However, industries of the past and natural disasters (flooding) have left environmental impacts that we still struggle to overcome today. Therefore, brownfield redevelopment and resiliency have become a critical component of smart growth in our community. These smart growth goals are clearly shown in several aspects of the established vision including Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play (page 273), Taking Pride in Our Urban and Village Centers (page 275) and Investing in our Legacy Sites (page 277). Specific actions related to this sustainability element are as follows:

Page 283 - Action Table – Vision Item 1: Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play

- Prepare and promote model ordinances to encourage public art, pop up stores, food trucks, outdoor seating at restaurants, and other land uses which create vibrant places.
- Support events and festivals
- Foster public art

Page 285- Action Table – Vision Item 2: Engaging our Students and Young Professionals

- Support neighborhood cleanup, public art/murals, and other SUNY Broome and BU student volunteer opportunities.

Page 286 - Action Table – Vision Item 3: Taking Pride in our Urban and Village Centers

- Support and submit grant applications for streetscape, bike and pedestrian amenities, housing development, commercial investment, façade improvements in our rural villages and urban centers.

Page 289 - Action Table – Vision Item 5: Investing in our Legacy Sites

- Develop reuse plans for prominent brownfield sites.
- Complete Endicott Johnson BOA Step III
- Collaborate with other BOA initiatives in Broome County
- Consider offering incentives for the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites.

Conserve natural areas (including strategies to designate open space and protect it from development)

Conserving and promoting our abundant natural areas is a significant part of the Vision in the Comprehensive Plan. Under Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in Our Scenic Beauty (page 276) it is noted that “Just as we plan for our traditional, gray infrastructure so should plan for our ‘green infrastructure’ in recognition of their important public health and community service functions”, and “We have done a great deal to protect and preserve our natural beauty...We need to expand and strengthen the linkages between open space hubs and urban and village centers.” Areas of focus include natural areas that provide flood mitigation benefits, recreation opportunities and agricultural productivity. Specific actions related to this sustainability element are as follows:

Page 287 - Action Table – Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in Our Scenic Beauty

- Prepare a plan for Broome County Parks to govern their development, use and maintenance
- Actively pursue the goals and projects identified in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, the Greenway Plan, and the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan.
- Evaluate opportunities for integrating historic preservation into the open space network.
- Educate the community and decision makers on the importance of scenic and recreational resources.
- Promote the use of regulatory tools to protect valuable natural resources such as conservation easements, ridgeline overlay districts, conservation subdivisions, stream buffers, and enhanced floodplain development standards.
- Promote, protect and enhance agriculture through the Ag District program, continuing to involve the farming community in decision making, and support of the Greater Binghamton Farmers Market.
- Provide more training for local officials including planning and zoning boards, assessors, code officials on issues related to agriculture.

Promote a healthy and safe community

To achieve the goals, set forth in the Vision for Broome County, it is essential that we ensure that we are doing all we can to protect and enhance the health and safety of our community members. In order to achieve Vision Item 1: Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play (page 273) and Vision Item 3: Taking Pride in our Urban and Village Centers (page 275), it is essential that our urban areas and rural villages be places where people feel safe and welcome, and provide housing options that are safe and healthy (lead abatement, drinking water quality, etc.). The Plan aims to achieve this by identifying opportunities to create affordable housing opportunities in downtown areas, funding programming to mitigate health issues in housing stock, enhancing streetscaping and public spaces to draw people to our downtowns making them vibrant and welcoming, combating blight, and using the development review process to identify opportunities where building and neighborhood design can help to minimize public safety risks. In addition, public health and safety is threatened by increasing flood risk in our communities. A major component of the Plan is Vision Item 8: Becoming More Resilient (page 279). This vision item supports integrating hazard mitigation into land use and capital investment decisions stating “We can become a more resilient community by further incorporating hazard mitigation planning concepts into decision making, instituting policies that protect property and public safety, and encouraging natural, non-structural solutions to reducing flood damages. Specific actions related to this sustainability element are as follows:

Page 283 - Action Table - Vision Item 1: Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play

- Support and submit grant applications for the renovation of substandard housing, with an emphasis on health and safety, water quality, lead abatement and issues related to “Aging in Place”

Page 286 - Action Table – Vision Item 3: Taking Pride in our Urban and Village Centers

- Combat blight in primary and secondary corridors and gateway areas through enhanced code enforcement and grant-funded façade improvement programs.
- Utilize site plan review to enhance public safety through proper design and utilization of the built environment.

Page 292 - Action Table – Vision Item 8: Becoming More Resilient

- Encourage the application of No Adverse Impact Floodplain Management strategies
- Establish contingency plan for use during a flood or other disaster to keep County operations running
- Educate the business community about contingency planning during floods to keep businesses running
- Promote and coordinate participation in FEMA’s Community Rating System
- Provide comments on land use (239) reviews that encourage appropriate floodplain activities and reference preliminary FEMMA floodplain mapping.
- Utilize local organizations to educate the community about flooding, flood insurance, stream and river functions, flood mitigation and contingency planning.

Foster equity (including strategies for housing, schools, transportation, recreation, food, and environmental exposures)

It is essential that the Comprehensive Plan foster equity to create a community and economy that supports and is sustainable for all residents of the County. The Comprehensive Plan does this by focusing on workforce development, creating safe and healthy housing options, enhancing access to transportation options, and supporting local food options. The Comprehensive Plan noted that the top industries in the County have the largest number of openings, and these are difficult to fill. The Plan focuses on ensuring that available schooling pathways help ensure that residents (especially disadvantaged populations) are going to receive the training necessary to fill the available jobs. In addition, there is a focus on ensuring that alternative transportation options are sufficient to meet the needs of the community, and that transportation isn't a barrier to employment, or meeting the other needs that make a community livable. In addition, the Plan supports local agriculture and farmers markets. These are essential components in providing healthy food options throughout the County.

Page 254 - Workforce Recommendations

- Develop career pathways and related initiatives in local school districts to better prepare high school students for college and careers.
- Increase awareness of career opportunities in advanced manufacturing and other local industry sectors among high school students and unemployed youth.
- Make a concerted effort to recruit unemployed workers, women, minorities, refugees, and recent immigrants to industries such as manufacturing, construction and transportation and warehousing which have high proportions of older workers.
- Develop additional resources to educate and train Broome County residents for jobs in warehousing and distribution.

Page 283 - Action Table - Vision Item 1: Making Broome County an Inviting Place to Live, Work and Play

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Page 286 Action Table – Vision Item 3: Taking Pride in our Urban and Village Centers

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Page 287 - Action Table – Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in Our Scenic Beauty

- Promote, protect and enhance agriculture through the Ag District program, continuing to involve the farming community in decision making, and support of the Greater Binghamton Farmer's Market.
- Update the Broome County Agriculture Economic Development Plan

Page 290 - Action Table - Vision Item 6: Making a Commitment to High Standards in Services

- Investigate ways to improve public transportation to accommodate the aging in place population and assist job seekers in finding employment.
- Consider developing minimum standards for allowing participation in auctions of County foreclosed properties including barring individuals who have a history of code violations or delinquent taxes.

Page 294 – Action Table - Vision Item 9: Investing in Our Workforce, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- Facilitate ready access to business mentors

Decrease dependence on fossil fuels and support energy efficiency and renewable energy production

At the County level planning for energy efficiency and renewable energy production centers around improving efficiency at County facilities, educating and aiding local municipalities for enacting policies that support efficiency and renewable energy, and providing support to residents and businesses for implementing these improvements.

Page 297 – Action Table – Vision Item 7: Making a Commitment to High Standards in Building Design and Renovation

- Develop a County strategic energy plan which integrates energy efficiency features and policies at County facilities.

Page 292 – Action Table – Vision Item 8: Becoming More Resilient

- Ensure that local zoning ordinances allow for alternative energy

Page 294 – Action Table – Vision Item 9: Investing in Our Workforce, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- Connect businesses to NYSERDA and other programs which increase energy efficiency and lower the cost of utilities.

Foster the efficient use of natural resources (e.g., water conservation)

The County has recognized that identifying the multiple benefits of open space and natural resource areas helps to garner broader support for the protection and sustainable management of those resources. The Comprehensive Plan notes that other plans have helped in achieving this including the County-wide LWRP, Greenway Plan and Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan. All of these plans have identified additional, more-detailed recommendations for management of our waterfront areas and other resources. The Open Space (page 65) and Water Resources (page 90) sections of the plan outline details about our natural resources for consideration in the County’s vision and action items, but also as a basis upon which local communities can use the information for their local planning efforts. Broome County identified an action (see below) to make this information available via our Broome County GIS (mapping) services, which allows local municipalities, organizations, residents and business to view and utilize the data for their own purposes for efficient use of these resources at every level. The Plan also includes several resiliency actions that recognize the importance of natural resource areas for flood and water quality protection, protecting the productivity of working landscapes for their economic and environmental benefits, and assessing which natural and cultural heritage lands are also

significant natural resource areas. These issues are a high priority for local officials and therefore, management of natural resources to achieve these objectives are become a priority. Specific actions related to this sustainability element are as follows:

Page 287 - Action Table – Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in Our Scenic Beauty

- Actively pursue the goals and projects identified in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, the Greenway Plan and the Susquehanna Heritage Area Management Plan.
- Update the Broome County Agriculture Economic Development Plan
- Explore opportunities for integrating historic preservation into the open space network.

Page 292 – Action Table – Vision Item 8: Becoming More Resilient

- Encourage natural, non-structural solutions to reducing flood damages.
- Make open space/natural resource data readily available to municipalities, developers, and the general public through the establishment of GIS data and tools for that purpose.
- Implement demonstration projects on County properties to promote and encourage green infrastructure and energy efficiency and ensure that these actions are well marked and marketed.
- Integrate flood mitigation and stormwater management projects and policies into County capital improvement planning process.
- Support/undertake watershed-based analyses to identify intermunicipal opportunities for water quality restoration/flood attenuation and implementation of identified projects.

Promote the development of (or the conservation of) local food systems

This is a very important aspect of the Comprehensive Plan. Broome County has long recognized the importance of supporting local agriculture as part of our economy and as part of meeting local food needs. In Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in our Scenic Beauty (page 276), the Plan notes that “We recognize the importance of agriculture both economically and as part of the character of the County...Agriculture is important for maintaining open space and our rural character. Supporting the agricultural community keeps these farms a productive part of our economy.”

Page 287 - Action Table – Vision Item 4: Taking Pride in Our Scenic Beauty

- Promote, protect and enhance agriculture through the Ag District program, continuing to involve the farming community in decision making, and support of the Greater Binghamton Farmer’s Market.
- Update the Broome County Agriculture Economic Development Plan (*Note: This plan was just completed and includes more detailed recommendations pertaining to local food systems*)